A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Tuesday, October 11. 1709.

RUMOUR assisted by *Jacobitism*, is so busie in alarming the poor impos'd-upon People of this Nation, that I cannot but go on to clear up the Mists of scandalous Delusions, which are daily thrown upon us in *Britain*; and this by all possible Means, as far as this Paper will extend: I have already given you a short Scheme of the State of Affairs in *Scotland* relating to the Church; and having recapitulated what was necessary to introduce the Story, and from a Connexion with what had gone before, I left it to what is now to come.

After the grand Design of a Party in *England*, to expose the Church of *Scotland* as a persecuting Church, had been carry'd on to the Height, and printed Books, clamouring Letters, and railing Sermons, had ecchoed the Noise of Persecution for Conscience all over the Nation; The honest Men among the Church-men began to resent it, and were a little angry, that they should tolerate *Dissenters* in *England*, and at the same time the *Presbyterians* in *Scotland* should persecute *Episcopacy* with such Violence; nay, and even some *Dissenters* in *England* pretended *to open at it*: But they all became surpriz'd and perfectly astonish'd, when upon farther Enquiry they found, that all this Thing call'd Persecution, was nothing but a meer *suppressing of Jacobitism*; and shutting up the Meeting-houses of those, who would neither own the Government,

Government, take the Oath, or pray for the QUEEN; and that the quiet *Episcopal* Ministers in *Scotland*, who would take the Oaths to, and pray for the QUEEN, were not only allow'd to preach, but were really never turn'd out of the Churches, possessing them to this Day; now when this came to be made publick, and the honest People in *Scotland* were oblig'd in the Vindication of Truth to lay these Things open to the World, it is not to be express'd, how this RUMOUR dy'd away, melting before Truth, as Wax before the Sun; honest Men abhorr'd the Abuse put upon their Brethren——— All the moderate Churchmen in *England* agreed, it was nothing but what ought to be done, and nothing but what the Church of *England* her self has done, who suffers not one *Non-juror* in *England* to possess a Church, or if known, to preach in private *undisturb'd*.——— And this grew so publick and notorious in *England*, that even their Friends grew asham'd of it—and by Degrees it drop'd, and we heard no more of this Thing call'd Persecution——*It had also another Effect.*

For here it began to be more clearly discover'd, that this was a Party-Project, only contriv'd by the High Gentlemen in *Engl.* to whom it was most absolutely necessary, that this Cry of Persecution should be rais'd in *Scotland*; and since they cannot begin it upon a Sham, *as before*, they resolve to do something, that being inconsistent with the Laws and Constitution of the Church of *Scotland*, and even the Union it self, should force the People of *Scotland* to have Recourse to those Laws, and that Constitution, for Redress of; and now this is the old well-try'd Experiment of bringing in the Common Prayer into Usage in *Scotland*; the Opposing which is now to be call'd Persecution.

This Contrivance is most accurately calculated for the carrying on the devilish Design in hand; for in this Case they know, the Question in Debate will no more be, whether the Person that reads the Prayers shall be qualify'd or no; for qualify'd People must be had, and there is no doubt, but qualify'd Wretches may be found to do it——And indeed they have found a fit Engine to begin with Prayer-Reading, whose Character we have given in part, and perhaps may speak farther to, in the Process of his Story.

With this Fellow *they have begun* to set up the Common-Prayer-Book in the Streets of *Edinburgh*—in Hopes, that the People there, resolving not to bear it, will fall upon them, and suppress them—And then they may call it Persecution for meer *Churchof Englandisme*, and that they will call for Conscience Sake.

Now, *in the First of these*, it is most certain, they will *not be defeated*——— For that the People of *Scotland* will not endure it, is most true—and that they ought not to endure it *by Law*, and that no Toleration of it can be introduc'd by Law, no not by Parliament, I do offer to maintain, and will defend in the Face of any Legal Authority in the World.

Now, that this Matter may be effectually discuss'd, *even in this Paper*, as far as Time and Room will allow, and that your Ears may be all prepar'd against the Delusions, *they are to follow*, I shall only at this time lay down some general Heads, which I shall enlarge upon, as the Circumstances of this Affair shall afterwards call for—And I doubt not to prove every one of them.

1. I shall evidently demonstrate in the Sequel of these Things, that this Attempt of introducing the Common-Prayer into *Scotland* is not the Act and Deed, no not of the *Episcopal* Church of *Scotland*, or so much as with her Approbation, but a meer State-Trick, a Cast of *Jacobite* Politicks, with the same Design, and by the same Sett of Tools, that the like Attempt was, in the Year 1638, to their own Confusion, as I doubt not this will also prove, which introduc'd the first War in *Scotland*, and by it the effectual disowning the Attempt by King *Charles* I. at the Pacification which follow'd.

2. I shall show you, that the *Episcopal Church in Scotland*, other than as they were acted by a Court-Party, had really no Inclination to, or Zeal for the Common Prayer, *even when that Attempt was made*. And this is prov'd *very briefly* by noting, that they never would admit of the

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Common-Prayer, when their Hierarchy was reigning for 28 Years in *Scotland*, during which, they had so reduc'd *Scotland* to the absolute Power and Will of their Party, that they were able to have forc'd it down their very Throats.

3. This, and the brief History of the *Episcopal* Party from the Revolution, will serve to prove, that this Dispute now coming on *in no Point of Conscience* —— That the *Episcopal* People themselves do not like or choose it, but their Politick Friends are every Day pressing them to it, as the only Thing that will get them an Interest, and serve the Cause they have been defeated in.

4. I shall undertake to prove, that the State of Toleration in *England*, *and Toleration in Scotland*, are vastly different on several Accounts, and that there can be no rational Argument drawn from the one to the other —— And in this Difference I shall observe,

Toleration in *England* is consistent with the Laws; in *Scotland*, repugnant to the very Constitution and the Union.

Toleration *in England* is consistent with the Safety of the National Church; *in Scotland*, destructive to her very Foundation.

Toleration *in England* no way interferes with the Discipline of the Church in punishing Scandals; *in Scotland* it effectually destroys it.

Toleration *in England* is sought for tender Consciences only; *in Scotland* for Politicks and *Jacobitism* only, and no Pretence of Conscience can be insisted on.

Toleration *in England* was most reasonable, so many Thousands (perhaps Millions) of People being now *Dissenters*, and none of their Ministers suffer'd to continue in their Churches.

Toleration *in Scotland* is most absurd, *since* after the Deposing *Episcopacy*, almost all the *Episcopal* Ministers, that would take the Oaths, are permitted to remain in their Churches, *tho' continuing Episcopal*, and refusing to submit to the *Presbyterian* Church-Governments.

Toleration *in England* is given to none, but such as are known Friends to the Government, *and upon Condition*, that they and their Hearers, *if requir'd*, should take the Oaths to the QUEEN.

Toleration *in Scotland* can be demanded for none but such as are known Enemies to the Government, and that still refuse to take the Oaths, and whose Hearers, *if they should take the Oaths*, would refuse to joyn with them.

I shall after these Things prove, that the *Episcopal* People in *Scotland* can never reasonably desire a Toleration, and that when they have it, it would *undo them*; since none can expect a Toleration, but such as take the Oaths, and they must be distracted that will take the Oaths for Leave to preach in a Meeting-house, who, if they would have taken the Oaths, need never have come out of the Churches.

I shall show, that there are several of the very Meeting-houses in *Scotland* now kept in Parishes, where the Parish-Minister is, and always was *Episcopal*, and who will not hear or joyn with their Parish-Minister, tho' he is *Episcopal*, only because he has taken the Oaths. And these are they for whom a Toleration is requir'd!

I shall enquire briefly, what Reason can be given, why *Jacobitism* should be tolerated in *Scotland* more than in *England*, and perhaps attempt to prove just the contrary.

I shall enquire into the real Design of this new Attempt of introducing the Common-Prayer Book in *Scotland*, and particularly why the *Roman* Catholicks are so very well pleas'd with it— *And in this I shall ask a Question*, Whether there is not as much Reason, and as little Danger, in attempting to bring the Mass into *England*, as the Common-Prayer into *Scotland*, and perhaps may undertake to prove the Affirmative— without reflecting on the *English* Liturgy at all.

I shall then examine, whether the QUEEN, or the *British* Parliament, or all the cunning Art and Policy of Lawyers, Wit of Statesmen, or K——y of Churchmen, can bring this Innovation upon *Scotland*,

Scotland, without overthrowing the Union, mortgaging Faith, Honour, Neighbourhood, their own Interest, and the Constitution of *Britain*?

Lastly, I shall enquire, whether the *House* of *Commons* can so much as put the Question in their House, Whether there shall be a Toleration in *Scotland* or no, without first putting the previous Question, (*Viz.*) Whether they can put a Question that is inconsistent without the Union or no?

I shall enter upon many more Heads in this Affair, but these may serve to begin with.

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